INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY



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SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

1. Prior to nationalization, there existed some 180, mostly small, enterprises manufacturing drugs in Czechoslovakia. Most of these were closed down at the time of nationalization. Those which were allowed to continue to operate were run by their former owners or managers under State instructions. Breakdowns in production occurred as a result of difficulties with raw materials. The number of drugs produced was cut from 6,000 to 600, and later to 350. 25X1

2. Whereas there exists a domestic production basis for salicilates, sulfonamide, calcium salts, and glucose, the manufacture of alkaloids, analgesics and antipyretics, hormones, and vitamins is hardly past its beginnings. Digitalis preparations are obtained from domestic purpurea and lanata species, and secaline-alkaloids from artificially grown ergot. Home-grown poppies serve as the raw material for morphine and its derivatives. Certain shortages are overcome by deliveries from the USSR (barbiturates), or through barter deals with other Satellites. Proof of the economy exercised in the employment of effective drugs is clear, for example, from the composition of the following preparation, introduced in 1952 as a special drug against climacteric difficulties:

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| Oestron | 250 IU |
| Aneurin | 0.005 g. |
| Phenobarbital | 0.02 g. |
| Theobromin | 0.05 g. |

(The retail price for 30 pills was equivalent to $1.00)

3. UNRRA donated a complete penicillin factory in which the production of important antibiotics started in 1946. Even so it took three years before there was a satisfactory supply of drugs. At present, amorphous and crystalline penicillin, procain-penicillin, a mixed preparation with a rapid and protracted working component, and a modification for absorption per os, are being made. It was not until 1953 that experimental production of streptomycin began. Great efforts were made to produce chloramphenicol, available through synthesis, and last year a group of workers was granted a State Prize for having solved this problem, although for the moment, as it appears, only on a laboratory scale. There is a mutual exchange of experience with USSR research centers and a search for still

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further antibiotics is proceeding. Particular attention is being devoted to the so-called phytoncides (tokin) (sic), that is to say, antibacteriological substances occurring in plants.

4. In the course of research into the production of blood and plasma preservation, increased attention is being paid to fractions. There is special interest in gamma-globulin, which is held to be of great potential use, in combination with chloramphenicol, in the treatment of poliomyelitis and pertussis.

5. Intensive work is proceeding on the newer tuberculostatica such as PAS, streptomycin, and dihydrostreptomycin. There was very great general interest in isoniacid[1], as a result of which the Ministry of Health, evidently finding this preparation difficult to obtain, informed the public that there were still grave doubts about its effectiveness and forbidding its application until full tests had been made. However, at that moment Hungary, obviously well ahead with its production, was advertising an isoniacid preparation in the Schweizer Medizinische Wochenschrift.

6. Herbs are sought to replace unobtainable synthetic pharmaceutical substances. The Satellite states have followed the example of the USSR, which founded a special center (WILAR) (sic) in 1931 for research on medicinal plants. The extent to which synthetic medicinal substances have been replaced by phytochemicals appears from an official collection of prescriptions, issued in 1953, in which 50% of the pharmaceutical formulae require ingredients of vegetable origin. It may be assumed that this rebirth of "natural therapy" is not voluntary, but a result of shortages in other types of medicines.

Comment: Probably isonicotinic acid.

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